



Ararat Rural City

# MINUTES

## CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES (CFC&C) WORKING GROUP

**Friday 14 February 2025**

To be held in **Mayor's Room**  
Ararat Rural City Council Offices, 49 Vincent St, Ararat/[Microsoft Teams Link](#)

Commencing at 9.45am  
Concluded at 11:10am

**Acknowledgement of Country**

Ararat Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work and recognise their connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their elders' past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**CFC&C Working Group Purpose:**

We've formed this working group to strengthen child participation in local communities and ensure that children's voices, needs, priorities, and rights are central to public policies, as well as child- and youth-focused events and programs. Our goal is to make our townships and communities more child-friendly by sharing ideas and examples that create more opportunities for our youngest citizens. Some key ground rules for our CFC&C Working Group are:

**One person speaks at a time**

**All opinions are valid**

**Stay on topic**

**Everyone has an opportunity to contribute.**

**CFC&C WORKING GROUP CHAIR: Nerissa Gee (Ararat Rural City Council)**

**ATTENDEES:** Nerissa Gee, Jane Moriarty, Blake Cox-Davis, Karen Armstrong, Dr Linda Henderson and Anita San Ba

**APOLOGIES:** Dr Tim Harrison, Erin Brown, Andrew Parsons, Melissa Fithall, Keryn Leggett, Therese Arnott and Tracy Costigan

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**1. Introductions – Nerissa Gee has been nominated as the CFC&C Chair and welcomed**

**CFC&C Working Group Members. Each person Introduced themselves and stated their professional role and how it relates to interest in being a CFC&C Working Group member:**

**Nerissa Gee**, Pre-Prep Project Coordinator/Supported Playgroup Facilitator

**Blake Cox-Davis**, Early Childhood Educator and student of Occupational Therapies

**Karen Armstrong**, Physiotherapist

**Dr Linda Henderson**, Senior Lecturer of Early Years Education

**Anita San Ba**, CALD Outreach Officer/New Settlement Program Officer and student of Early Childhood Education and Care and Primary Education.

**Jane Moriarty**, Executive Officer of Youth Services

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**2. ARCC CFC&C Working Group Terms of Reference for discussion**

Nerissa Gee has developed the CFC&C Working Group Terms of Reference and in those, it is stated, the CFC&C Working group will meet 4 times per year and half of the current CFC&C Working Group members plus one is required to operate and make any decisions. Due to an apology from member made less than an hour before the meeting, Nerissa Gee, as the Chair, made the decision to keep the meeting. Nerissa stated that any advisory members would be welcomed and may be involved in a consultative role but not form part of the CFC&C working group.

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**3. Adopting and becoming a signatory of the CFC&C Charter (The Charter)**

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Members who joined today's meeting looked at the VGLA CFCC Resources and an example of work done at other organisations for their CFC&C Working Group Action Plans online. Ideas on how best to advocate for children were shared and how to best capture children's voice and/or needs for their communities was discussed. Nerissa shared YouTube clips on the operation of a Voice Lab for surveying children in a child friendly manner and with the help of the Polyglot Theatre company. This unique model for collecting children's thoughts and ideas could be used to determine what our youngest citizens would like to see happen in their communities and/or what their needs are to be able to thrive in society [Voice Lab - Polyglot Theatre | Polyglot Theatre](#). Dr Linda Henderson raised the fact that there are other means for collecting children's' voices and suggested that an Art's Based Methodology could be used in consulting with children. Dr Linda also suggested that there needs to be proper analysis of the data retrieved from any form of survey or consultation.

Karen Armstrong suggested that school could be involved in collecting children's ideas and surveys/questionnaires could form part of the school programs.

Jane Moriarty stated that there is consideration to be made with seeking parent/caregiver permissions for children to consult with anyone outside of school and Department of Education have protocols for surveying children in schools. Dr Linda stated that there are Human Research Ethic Committee that can be used to ensure consent, privacy and confidentiality protocols are adhered to.

Dr Linda asked the question of who is going to oversee consent and does ARCC have ethically correct research standards or protocols. **Nerissa to action and seek answers.**

Jane asked what the focus for ARCC was in establishing the Working Group and Dr Linda asked why ARCC wanted to be a signatory on The Charter. Phuong Au, Strategic Project Lead gave ARCC's reasoning, stating that the work that was being done in the Pre-Prep implementation and Community Vision 2030, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and various other plans and policies, aligned with The Charter, Councillors had no issues with ARCC adopting The Charter's principles. Becoming a signatory has affirmed ARCC's commitment to the principles of the Charter and conveys the continuing resolve to strive towards communities where children

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can thrive. The CFC&C working group has been formed to act as an advisory to ARCC’s CEO and Councillors and to ensure the Victorian Child Friendly Cities & Communities Charter’s principles are upheld and advanced by ARCC. In short, The CFC&C Working Group members are here to advocate for children and give them a voice through what we know from our professions and as community members.

**4. CFC&C Working Group Action Plan –**

An action plan has been developed by Nerissa Gee as a start for members to compile ideas to advance the principles of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.



ARCC Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group Action Plan					
Action	Description	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources Needed	Status
Principle 1: Act in the best interests of the child.					
Principle 2: Freedom for children to express their individual opinions and right to have these considered in decisions that affect them.					
Principle 3: Create equity for all children based on their needs.					
Mandate: Uplift Child Safety and Child Friendly organisational culture.	<i>*Work with local authorities to improve safety measures for children in public spaces</i>	*Policy Lead	*April 2025	*Research, data on incidents	*In progress
Mandate: Improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of initiatives that support children to participate in civic life.	<i>*Conduct child-focused consultations to gather feedback on public space design</i>	*Coordinator	*March 2025	*Venue, survey materials	*Pending
Mandate: Amplify the voice of the child in decision making forums.					

\* Indicates an example only

Feedback on this format is welcomed and changes to be discussed at the next meeting before implementation.

**5. Any Other Business**

Jane asked what budget if any had been allocated for the ideas that are created by the working group. **Nerissa to action and seek answers.**

There is no budget for the actual running of the working group. This is a volunteer-based working group.

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Karen asked for information about the next Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. Nerissa has sought answers from Phuong Au- The next term of the MPHWP will be completed by the end of October. Community consultation will be in phase one and notification of this date will be publicized.

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**6. Next Working Group – Wednesday 21st May 2025**

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# Child Friendly Cities & Communities Working Group: Terms of Reference

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Category Type: Terms of Reference

Type: Administrative

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Last Review Date: N/A

Date Approved:

Next Review Date:

Revision No.: New

Stakeholder Engagement:

Chief Executive Officer

Councillors

Child Friendly Cities & Communities Working Group

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# Child Friendly Cities & Communities Working Group: Terms of Reference



Ararat Rural City

## Introduction

The Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFCC) Working Group has been established to advise the Chief Executive Officer and Council on the actions of the Victorian Child Friendly Cities & Communities Charter (“The Charter”) and other advocacies of children aged birth to 17 years old, as requested by the CEO.

The CFCC Working Group will not be an established Committee of Council, and as such will not provide advice directly to Council. Rather, it will work in an advisory capacity to the CEO on matters that ensure the Victorian Child Friendly Cities & Communities Charter’s principles are upheld and advanced. The results of these analyses will then form advice to Council on matters of The Charter and its statement of principles.

## Purpose/Scope

The Victorian CFCC Charter is a statement of principles, underpinning actions which support communities to be child friendly. It embraces the universal rights of children from birth to 17 years of age, and encompasses three tenets: to act in the best interests of the child, to allow children the freedom to express their individual opinions and the right to have those opinions considered in decisions that affect them, and to create equity for all children based on their needs.

Ararat Rural City Council has become a signatory to the Victorian CFCC Charter and in doing so, has made a commitment to increasing the attention on the best interests of children and further develop strategies to ensure every child has opportunities to thrive in their community.

## Membership

The composition of the CFCC Working Group will be as follows:

- Chair (Chief Executive Officer or Nominee)
- A minimum of four community representatives selected through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process; and
- A minimum of four skills-based representatives, with academic/practical/administrative skills and experience in child related health, recreation and/or in education.
- Up to fifteen members are appointed each calendar year that represent the diversity of the communities they serve.

## CFCC Working Group Role

The role of the CFCC Working Group is to:

- Share responsibility in planning and convening CFCC Working Group meetings, including planning the agenda, chairing meetings, and taking minutes.
- Hold an annual meeting to develop a work plan, as conveyed by the Chair.
- Provide community comments on child friendly cities and communities strategy development.
- Based on evidence, best practice, and feedback from CFCC Working Group meetings, contribute to the schedule review of Council’s policies, standards, and legislative requirements to ensure CFCC Charter alignment.
- Participate in Network meetings each quarter to share how Ararat Rural City Council is embedding the CFCC Charter.



# Child Friendly Cities & Communities Working Group: Terms of Reference



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The role of the Chief Executive Officer or Nominee is to:

- Chair the CFCC Working Group
- Arrange meeting documents
- Report to Council on the outcomes of the CFCC Working Group
- Provide advice to Council on the development of policies, standards, and legislative requirements in alignment with The Charter.

## Meetings

The CFCC Working Group will meet 4 times per year, with extra meetings as required at the discretion of the CEO. Half of the current CFCC Working Group members plus one is required to operate the Working Group and make any decisions. In the Chair's absence, a Deputy Chief Executive Officer will chair the meeting.

Changes to the CFCC Working Group can only be made following a formal Expression of Interest process, and at the approval of the majority.

The CFCC Working Group may invite suitably skilled persons to join the CFCC Working Group as a co-opted member for a specified purpose and period. A co-opted member joins the CFCC Working Group in an advisory capacity and does not form part of the quorum.

All CFCC Working Group members are expected to attend each meeting in person or via video conferencing. A meeting agenda will be forwarded to each member prior to the meeting.

## Voting

Voting is generally not a requirement for Working Groups, however if a vote is required, the matter will be decided by majority of votes from members who are present at the meeting. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair holds the casting vote.

## Review

A review of the CFCC Working Group will be conducted biannually. The review will be conducted by the Chief Executive Officer.

## Retiring Members

In the event of a community member resigning from the CFCC Working Group, an EOI for a new community member will be advertised. In the event of a skills-based representative resignation, the Chief Executive Officer will arrange for a replacement representative.